

ideas, thus helping to keep the historic traditions pure by the test of agreement. The smiths and skilful artificers, the weavers of woollen goods and others, came to show their wares and sell. The young people came to see and hear, and to enjoy one another's society; it was a time for marrying and giving in marriage. The serious came to hear the latest politics. All came to enjoy the music and poetry, the sports and the competitions. And so important a feature in the national life was the Ænach, that it was regulated by the strictest bye-laws, the breach of some of which was even punishable by death.

“The only fragment of the Ænach left is in the selling and buying of wares, and the social enjoyment of an Irish fair: but, with the exception, curiously enough, of this fragment, the whole non-political part of the institution is preserved in its main idea as the National Eisteddfod of Wales. That the custom was a general Celtic custom, and indeed not unknown to the Germanic peoples is certain. But there is, nevertheless, evidence to show that its revival in Wales in 1180, by Griffith ap Conan, was directly due to his observation of the practice in the neighboring country of Ireland, and thus that the Eisteddfod of Wales is historically continuous with the Irish Fair.”

It must be remembered that the bards who are so prominent in these assemblies were recognised as being practically the schoolmasters and historians of the nation as well as its poets. They could only attain the dignity of their position by years of hard study; there were seven different degrees amongst them, each of which had to be reached by means corresponding to the modern examination. To attain the highest it was necessary to know by heart seven times fifty stories. They travelled about the country from north to south and east to west, followed by their pupils, and everywhere they were received with